

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

'Need to show US, world who the Cuban Five really are'
— PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 78/NO. 30 AUGUST 25, 2014

Talks follow pullback by Israeli forces in Gaza

BY SETH GALINSKY

Negotiations between Tel Aviv and Hamas are continuing in Egypt as Israel's assault on the Gaza Strip winds down. Israeli soldiers completed their withdrawal from the strip Aug. 5, after destroying most of Hamas' attack tunnels to Israel. Nearly 2,000 Gaza

**CONDEMN ISRAELI ASSAULT!
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PALESTINE AND ISRAEL!**

— Editorial, p. 9

residents have been killed — more than 70 percent civilians, according to the U.N. — and nearly 10,000 wounded. Some 250,000 of the strip's 1.8 million people are displaced.

An initial agreement has been reached that Hamas will hand over control of Gaza border crossings with Egypt and Israel to police of the Palestinian Authority, which governs the West Bank, according to an Aug. 12 report from Ma'an news agency. But the two sides are far apart on other issues, and have still not agreed to an open-ended cease-fire.

The Israeli assault, which began July 7, is Tel Aviv's third war on Gaza since 2008 — and the most devastating — in retaliation for rocket launch-

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Separatist forces retreat, splinter in east Ukraine

BY JOHN STUDER

Separatist paramilitaries have retreated from more than 75 percent of the towns and villages they had seized in eastern Ukraine with backing from Moscow following mass mobilizations that overthrew President Viktor Yanukovich in February and marked a key turning point in defense of the country's national sovereignty.

Once in control of areas in the east, armed separatists simply sowed social chaos and appealed for Moscow's intervention. In the Luhansk and Donetsk regions, "armed separatists haven't managed to take over the lo-

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NO TO SANCTIONS ON RUSSIA!**

cal government," the Aug. 11 *Politico* magazine said. "Their reign is a partial occupation, based on individual buildings their gunmen have seized and camped out in, and roadside checkpoints."

Over the past week paramilitary forces have fled from Yasynuvata, a central rail hub in Donetsk province, as well as Krasnyi Luch, Pervomaisk, Kalynove and Komyshevukha in adjacent Luhansk.

Igor Strelkov, a Russian military intelligence officer who proclaimed himself defense minister of the so-

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Steelworkers in Illinois fight another lockout by Honeywell

BY JOHN HAWKINS

METROPOLIS, Ill. — Workers at Honeywell's uranium conversion facility here are preparing for another long fight with the multinational conglomerate if that is what it takes to win a new contract. At 11:45 p.m. Aug. 1, Honeywell locked out members of Steelworkers Local 7-669 for

the second time in four years.

In June 2010 the company locked out 220 union workers. Local 7-669 members won nationwide and international support for their fight and returned to work 14 months later in August 2011, after beating back most of the bosses' concession demands. Not

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Courtesy United Steelworkers Local 7-669

Honeywell uranium plant workers in Metropolis, Illinois, reject union-busting contract July 31.

Protests say: Arrest the cop who killed Michael Brown!

Actions against police brutality spread across US



AP Photo/St. Louis Post-Dispatch/Laurie Skrivan

Thousands have joined protests against killing of Michael Brown, 18, by a Ferguson, Missouri, cop Aug. 9. Above, demonstrators gather in front of Ferguson police station Aug. 11.

BY DAN FEIN
AND ILONA GERSH

FERGUSON, Mo. — Some 300 people demonstrated here on the morning of Aug. 11 to protest the police killing of 18-year-old Michael Brown, who was gunned down two days earlier in this predominantly

Black working-class suburb of St. Louis while on his way to his grandmother's house.

Protesters marched to the local Police Department demanding the identity of the cop be made public, and that he be charged with murder. Outside the station, cops from Ferguson and other jurisdictions were mobilized in riot gear.

"The cops act as judge, jury and executioner," Zaki Baruti, of the Uni-

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Win readers to 'Militant' and books on working-class politics

BY EMMA JOHNSON

"I like the paper because it helps me see the world and I like the books because they tell the truth about history," Kirenia Rodriguez told Edwin Fruit when he came to her house to re-

new her subscription in Kent, Washington, Aug. 10.

Many Cubans in the U.S. "say that Fidel Castro sent troops to Angola to die for nothing," said Rodriguez, who is originally from Cuba. "But I know that we helped liberate people there and these books help explain that," she said, referring to four books on the Cuban Revolution and the fight to free the Cuban Five that she bought when she first signed up for a sub-

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Kurdish fighters hold off advance of ISIS in Iraq

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Military gains by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria are devastating toilers in large areas of these countries under their control. The growth of this reactionary organization is a result of the three-and-a-half-year-long civil war waged by the Bashar al-Assad regime against workers and farmers in Syria and unintended consequences of U.S. foreign policy in the region.

ISIS has seized control of about one-third of Iraqi territory in the predominantly Sunni Arab west. In June ISIS combatants captured Mosul,

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Talks follow Gaza pullback

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es by Hamas and Islamic Jihad targeting civilian areas of Israel. Backed by Washington, Tel Aviv carried out more than 4,900 air sorties and mobilized 82,000 reservists at the peak of the offensive. The U.S.-financed Iron Dome anti-missile system intercepted 584 of the 3,460 rockets fired by Hamas.

According to the Israel Defense Forces, 64 Israeli soldiers were killed. Three civilians, including a Bedouin Arab resident of Israel and an immigrant worker from Thailand, died from Hamas rockets and mortars.

More than 30,000 workers in Gaza have lost their jobs at some 134 factories destroyed in the Israeli bombing raids, exacerbating high unemployment, which already stood at 50 percent. Without power to run treatment plants, untreated sewage was dumped directly into the Mediterranean Sea, contaminating fish and sickening fishermen. “The problem of pollution in the sea is worse than before the war,” Nizar Ayish, head of the Gaza fishermen’s 4,000-member union, told Ma’an.

The price of eggs has doubled from 10 shekels a box to 20 shekels (\$5.75) and the price of potatoes and tomatoes have tripled. Nearly half of Gaza’s people are now dependent on food aid from the United Nations to survive.

Gaza and the class struggle in Israel

Tel Aviv ended its 38-year occupation of Gaza in 2005. Over the last decade Israeli rulers — faced with continued resistance by Palestinians and insufficient Jewish immigration — had abandoned their goal of a “Greater Israel” stretching from the Jordan River to the

Mediterranean Sea. Instead, they have sought ways to divide Palestinians and maintain a Jewish majority within current boundaries. Nearly 21 percent of the citizens of Israel are Arabs, and it is not unusual for Jewish, Arab and immigrants to work side by side in the same factories, hospitals, and other workplaces; belong to the same unions; and go out on strike together.

Three years before its withdrawal from Gaza, Tel Aviv began building its West Bank “separation barrier” — which twists and turns throughout the West Bank splitting some towns in two and cutting through farmlands — isolating tens of thousands of Palestinians from each other.

Amid growing dissatisfaction with Fatah over its bourgeois corruption, harassment and arrest of political opponents, and collaboration with Israeli military forces, Hamas won elections in Gaza in 2006. Hamas painted itself as a more militant representative of the Palestinian struggle, swearing it would never recognize the existence of Israel. In June 2007 Hamas forced Fatah out of Gaza in bloody clashes.

After Hamas took control, Tel Aviv stopped granting entry permits to thousands of Gaza residents who worked in Israel and made it almost impossible for them to study abroad or to visit relatives inside Israel or the West Bank.

Hamas has since become increasingly isolated and has lost substantial aid from Arab bourgeois regimes in the region. Since the overthrow of the Muslim Brotherhood regime in Egypt last year, the Egyptian military has shut down 95 percent of the tunnels along the Egyptian border dug to bypass trade restrictions imposed by



Militant/Alyson Kennedy

Aug. 3 protest in Chicago, one of many around the world against Israeli assault on Gaza.

Tel Aviv. With its finances and base of support weakened, Hamas signed an agreement for a unity government in Gaza and the West Bank with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in April this year. But the agreement has been fraught with conflict and Tel Aviv has been pressing for its dissolution and replacement by Palestinian Authority rule.

“I recognize Israel,” Abbas said, after announcing the accord. He claimed that the new unity government would do the same, despite Hamas saying it would never recognize Israel.

On July 8, a day after the Israeli assault began, Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri declared on the group’s Al-Aqsa TV: “The policy of people confronting Israeli warplanes with their bare chests in order to protect their homes has proven effective against the occupation. ... We in Hamas call upon our people to adopt this policy.”

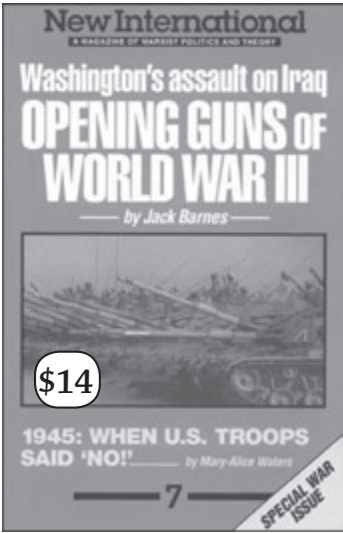
“We are fine, despite the 1,886 martyrs ... despite the 10,000 wounded,” Hamas Political Bureau member Osama Hamdan said in an Aug. 9 speech in Rabat, Morocco, a few days after the Israeli withdrawal. “We are fine. Four hundred eighty-six of our children were martyred in this battle, but Allah has blessed us with 4,500 babies in their places.”

“In this war, we said that the enemy would not cross into Gaza, and indeed, it was defeated on the outskirts of Gaza,” said Hamdan.

“We lost in one instant all we had worked for 40 years to build,” laborer Fouad Harara, 55, told the *New York Times* in Gaza City. “The only thing we gained is destruction.”

“I’m angry at the two sides,” Suhair al-Najjar, 32, told the *Times*. Najjar, who lost 30 relatives and her home in Khuza’a, a village on Gaza’s eastern border that was demolished in the fighting, described Hamas as “shoes,” an insult.

“They should have accepted the ceasefire,” teacher Hathem Mena, 55, told the *Washington Post* in Beit Lahiya, Gaza, near the border with Israel, referring to Hamas’ rejection of an Egyptian proposal soon after the Israeli assault began. “It would have stopped the bloodshed. ... The destruction is over on this side not the Israeli side.”



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THE MILITANT

Standing up for Ukrainian sovereignty

The ‘Militant’ covers how attempts by pro-Moscow separatists to divide Ukraine are being pushed back, widening space for working people there to press their demands and oppose government attempts to make workers pay for the capitalist economic crisis.



July 15 protest by rail workers in Kiev against wage cuts, layoffs and poor job conditions.

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant*’s views. These are expressed in editorials.

Sales of ‘Militant,’ books

Continued from front page
scription during the *Militant*’s spring drive. This time around Rodríguez picked up three more books in Spanish: *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* and *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* by Jack Barnes and *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* by Mary-Alice Waters. (See ad below for 11 books on special for subscribers.)

Supporters of the *Militant* are preparing for another drive to increase readership of the paper and books on revolutionary working-class politics. The seven-week campaign will begin Sept.

6 and readers are encouraged to join the effort.

In addition to selling door to door, supporters of the *Militant* have over the last week taken the paper to protests around the country against police killings and brutality, to workers engaged in union battles and demonstrations against Tel Aviv’s assault on Gaza.

Two workers on strike against Sloan Valve in Chicago signed up for the *Militant* when Alyson Kennedy and Leroy Watson visited the Steelworkers Local 7999 picket line Aug. 9. The *Militant* offers a 12-week subscription at half price for new readers to give them an opportunity to read and get acquainted with the paper.

A team of supporters from Chicago and Atlanta visited Metropolis, Illinois, Aug. 9-10 where members of United Steelworkers Local 7-669 at the Honeywell uranium plant were locked out by the company Aug. 1. In addition to visiting the picket line, the team went door to door in the town of 6,500.

“I can’t see any difference between Democrats and Republicans. They are both against the workers,” said Daniel Sullivan, a millwright and member of Carpenters Local 640.

In addition to Sullivan four other workers took



Militant/Ilona Gersh

Renee Jones, left, and Whitney Stanley pick up *Militant* from Dan Fein at Aug. 11 NAACP rally in Ferguson, Missouri, protesting cop killing of 18-year-old Michael Brown two days earlier.

out introductory subscriptions, reported Dan Fein. One of them, a gas station clerk, asked, “Does the paper cover Obama’s attack on the middle class forcing us to do with less?”

On Aug. 11, Fein and Ilona Gersh traveled from Chicago to St. Louis to take part in protests against the Aug. 9 cop killing of 18-year-old Michael Brown.

“At a morning rally three signed up for subscriptions and another eight bought copies of the paper,” Fein said. “We then went door to door and a construction worker, originally from Mexico, decided to go for the introductory offer. At an evening town hall meeting organized by the NAACP, we sold another subscription and 12 single copies.”

In Chicago, more than 3,000 people took part in an Aug. 10 march against

the Israeli assault on Gaza, sponsored by a number of Palestinian and Muslim organizations. “We sold 17 copies of the paper,” Kennedy reported. “Some argued that it’s a lie that Hamas placed missiles in mosques and public schools and that the tunnels are only used to bring food and cooking oil into Gaza. Many were open to discussing how an end to the reoccurring conflicts based on agreements between the two sides that recognize Israel and a Palestinian state would lay the basis for a way forward for the Palestinian struggle.”

From Montreal Annette Kouri reported that an Aug. 10 demonstration on the theme of Quebec-Gaza solidarity called by a coalition that included most of the major union federations drew 3,000 participants. “Although we found no immediate agreement when we called for both recognition of Israel and a Palestinian state, two participants subscribed and 19 bought copies of the *Militant*, with an extra \$11 in contributions,” she wrote. “We were able to have many discussions on the need to support these demands.”

Visiting workers door to door and at protests against police brutality in Thomaston, Georgia, over the past few weeks, supporters from Atlanta have signed up five new readers and sold several dozen copies of the paper, reported Susan LaMont Aug. 10. Protests demanding that police officer Phillip Tobin be fired broke out after Tobin used a Taser on 28-year-old Kelsey Rockmore June 11 and have continued since (see article on page 4). Tobin is named in dozens of complaints of cop misconduct and more than 400 people have signed a petition for his dismissal.

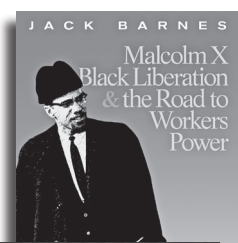
Sign up friends, co-workers and relatives. Bring the paper with you to picket lines, at social protests and political events. Join other *Militant* supporters selling door to door and as part of participation in working-class resistance by contacting a distributor near you listed on page 8. For extra papers, contact the *Militant* at (212) 244-4899 or themilitant@mac.com.



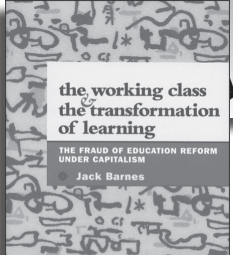
Militant/Dan Fein

“I see no difference between Democrats and Republicans. They are both against the workers,” said Daniel Sullivan, who signed up for subscription in Metropolis, Illinois, Aug. 9.

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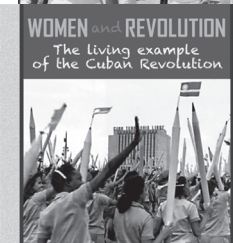
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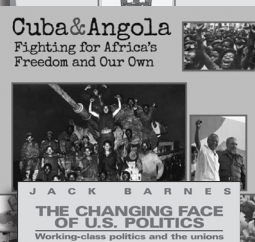


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See distributors on page 8



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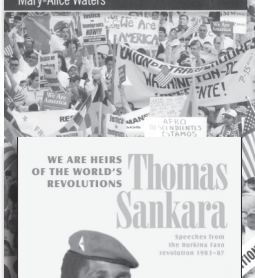
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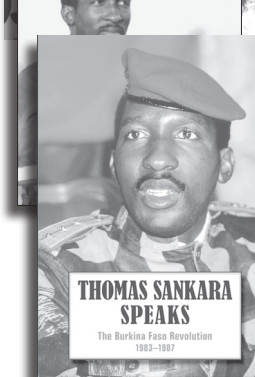
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Vigil marks 3rd anniversary of killing by cops in London

BY ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON
AND JAIE MILLER

LONDON — “Mark was executed in the streets by the Metropolitan Police. Someone should be held accountable,” Carole Duggan said as protesters gathered Aug. 4 for a vigil to commemorate the third anniversary of the killing of her nephew Mark Duggan by police.

Chanting “No Justice, no peace!” and “Who are the murderers? Police are the murderers!” more than 100 marched from Broadwater Farm Estate — a working-class high-rise residential area where Duggan lived in Tottenham, north London — to the location where the 29-year-old was killed by two gunshots after police stopped a cab he was traveling in.

Carole Duggan appealed for witnesses to come forward and pointed to a recent report by coroner Keith Cutler criticizing “the perception of collusion” in police accounts given to an inquest he headed. Last January, that inquest concluded that Mark’s killing had been “lawful,” despite also confirming that he was unarmed — contrary to police lies. The family has launched a legal appeal against the finding. “We want officer V53 to be stripped of his uniform,” Duggan said, “and to stand trial as a civilian charged with murder. ... We’re here for all the families of those who have died at the hands of the police.”

Speakers included relatives of some of them: Marcia Rigg, sister of Sean Rigg; Kadisha Brown-Burrell, sister of Kingsley Burrell; Myrna Simpson, mother of Joy Gardner; and Janet Alder, sister of Christopher Alder.

To big applause, Rigg hailed the murder charges that were brought days earlier against a police officer accused of killing Azelle Rodney, who was shot six times in 2005. The indictment is among a small handful of charges against cops in more than 1,400 cases of people who have died in custody or at the hands of the police since 1990.

“I came because we all need to unite against injustice,” said Tahmina Hemati, who came with her friend Temi Mwale, both of them members of Get Outta the Gang as well as being active in the Justice for Mark Duggan campaign. “Ethnic minorities are especially affected by stop and search. Then there’s joint enterprise,” referring to charges based on being an “associate” of someone convicted of a crime, especially targeting working-class youth.

“There are too many breaking points

in the community. If you don’t speak, you don’t get justice,” said Syed Ashan Ali, a worker at mobile phone company O2, originally from Pakistan, who came straight from work with his co-worker.

“I knew Mark. He wasn’t the bogeyman they created,” said creative arts teacher Jason Nwansi. “The way the media portrayed him, they dehumanized him.”

In another development, the Metropolitan Police has admitted that its Special Demonstration Squad gathered “inappropriate” information on families fighting the police over the deaths of their loved ones as it infiltrated political groups involved in the campaigns.



Militant/ Ólöf Andra Proppé

Carole Duggan speaking at Aug. 4 vigil in London marking third anniversary of cop killing of her nephew Mark Duggan. “We want officer to stand trial charged with murder,” she said.

Killing by policeman in Missouri sparks protests

Continued from front page

versal African Peoples Organization said at the rally, organized by the Ad Hoc Committee for Justice on Behalf of Michael Brown.

Demonstrations against the cop killing of Brown have spread nationwide and come on the heels of outrage over other recent incidents of political brutality, such as New York cops’ July 17 chokehold killing of Eric Garner in Staten Island.

Eyewitness and police accounts differ widely on what happened Aug. 9, but the basic facts are unambiguous: Brown, who is Black, was unarmed and attempting to flee when he was shot to death. An autopsy has confirmed he was shot multiple times.

According to Dorian Johnson, who was walking with Brown, the two were accosted by an officer who almost hit them with his car. The cop choked Brown, tried to pull him into the car, threatened him with a gun and shot him once, which provoked the two to try to escape. Brown was shot once while trying to run away and several more times after turning around with his hands

up. His body remained in the street for hours after he was killed.

According to a brief police account, an “encounter” with the two led to an assault on the cop and a struggle over the officer’s gun, which resulted in the first shot being fired.

Demonstrators chanted, “No justice, no peace,” “Hands up, don’t shoot,” and “If we don’t get it, shut it down.” At the end of the march there was a standoff between protesters and police, who blocked the entrance to the police station. Several speakers talked about the need for a peaceful demonstration, which remained disciplined and without cop violence.

The day after Brown was killed, thousands filled the streets at the site of the killing for a vigil. Many carried hand-made signs. The outpouring was met with hundreds of rifle-toting cops in riot gear with police dogs. Later in the day some residents took to rioting on West Florissant Avenue. Several businesses were destroyed or damaged and looted and several police cars damaged. Police arrested nearly three dozen people and dispersed crowds with tear gas and rub-

ber bullets.

“Nobody could leave their house and feel safe,” said high school student Jessica Williams about the riot. “We want the officer to be charged and go to jail.”

“The police think they can get away with this,” said Tobias Court, a student in his 20s and neighborhood resident. “I’ve never been to any marches before, but I thought I should come out today because the police are getting out of hand,” said Court, who is Caucasian.

“I came down to see if they really canceled the rally as they said on the news,” said Robert Hamilton. “I’m glad they didn’t because the world is watching what happens here now. How many times do police get arrested for shooting someone? Never. We need to get more people involved, especially the young ones. Some of them are going to be out on the street one way or another. It’s better if they’re marching with us.”

After the march on Monday, participants car-caravanned through the streets to the memorial where Brown was killed. Along the way, the caravan passed by the site of the looting where volunteers were cleaning up the damage and boarding up broken storefront windows.

“The cops were very aggressive at last night’s vigil,” said Carissa McGraw, 26, a boutique manager and one of the cleanup volunteers. “I heard one cop tell another, referring to me, ‘If she moves, push her down.’ We were protesting the killing, but for some it turned into looting and greed. They said they were looting for Mike, but it’s pointless.”

Monday night, the St. Louis County branch of the NAACP sponsored a town hall meeting attended by an overflow crowd of several hundred at a local church.

“We need a thorough investigation by those who are in charge of protecting and serving,” said NAACP National President Cornell Brooks.

“I can confirm that the FBI is working closely with the St. Louis Police Department to review the matter at this time,” Justice Department Special Agent Cheryl Mimura said at the meeting.

“You don’t do a dog like that,” Brown’s mother Lesley McSpadden told NewsOne Aug. 11. The police “didn’t let me identify him or anything,” she said. “It was some girl down there who had recorded the whole thing, took pictures, and she showed me a picture on her phone. ... my son laying there like this for no apparent reason.”

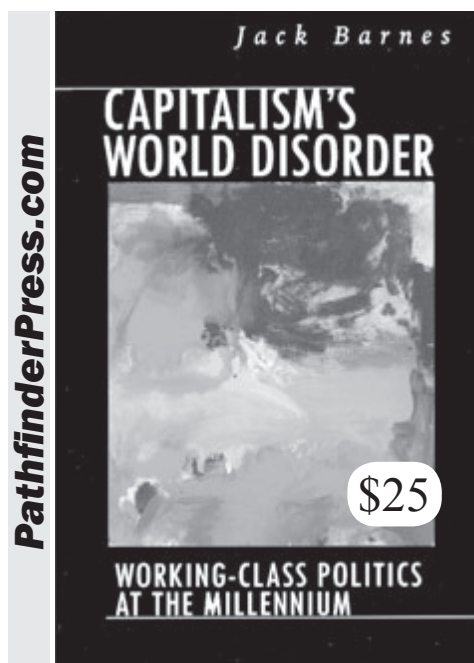
Thomaston, Ga., residents demand firing of officer



Militant/Dave Ferguson

THOMASTON, Ga. — More than 60 people packed the City Council chambers here Aug. 5 to demand the council fire police officer Phillip Tobin, who has a long history of brutality, harassment and intimidation against working people. One after another, residents testified to the violence and indignities meted out by Tobin in this small city 65 miles south of Atlanta. “Until the civil rights of our community are upheld, we will be here,” Rhondalynn Traylor told the council. Traylor is president of the Thomaston Improvement Association, which was formed after Tobin used a Taser on Kelsey Rockemore, 28, at the Handy Mart convenience store June 11. Mayor Hays Arnold said neither he nor council members could comment on whether Tobin would be fired. The Georgia Bureau of Investigation is officially looking into complaints.

— SUSAN LAMONT



ON THE PICKET LINE

Memphis unionists win jobs back, Kellogg ends lockout

ATLANTA — Locked-out union workers at Kellogg Company's cereal plant in Memphis, Tennessee, won reinstatement when a federal judge ruled July 30 that the food-processing giant had to end its nine-month lockout of members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union Local 252G.

The judge granted an injunction ordering Kellogg to end its lockout and reinstate all workers within five days. After the ruling, union members were told to call in and plan to return to work on Aug. 11.

As workers were celebrating their victory and preparing to go back into the plant, an administrative law judge ruled that the company was within its rights to lock the union members out. "Kellogg was pleased" with that ruling, said company spokeswoman Kris Charles in an Aug. 7 statement. "Given the [judge's] decision, we must reevaluate our prior plan to bring em-

ployees back to work next week."

A day later, however, the company reversed again and said that Local 252G members could return to work "while the company continues to mull over a ruling in its favor handed down late Thursday," according to the *Memphis Commercial-Appeal* Aug. 8.

The lockout began in October 2013, after Local 252G members refused to accept Kellogg's plan to hire temporary, part-time workers at \$6 an hour less and with fewer benefits and rights than employees working under the BCTGM contract. The company has been operating the plant with replacement workers since shortly after the lockout began.

"It felt good when the judge's ruling came down July 31," Jeannette McGraw, 58, who has worked at the plant since 2001, told the *Militant* Aug. 9 by phone from Memphis. "But with the administrative law judge's ruling, we're not sure what will happen."

"We've won the battle, but still haven't won the war," said Glen Mason, also by phone. He has worked at Kellogg's Memphis plant for 38 years.

Local 252G's determined fight has won support from working people in the Memphis area and beyond, including other unions, civil rights organizations and community groups.



Unionists on picket line Nov. 14 after Kellogg locked them out three weeks earlier in Memphis, Tennessee. They kept picket line up 24/7 until court ordered their reinstatement July 30.

From the start of the lockout until the July 30 ruling, union members staffed a round-the-clock picket line at the plant.

— Susan LaMont

SF concession workers celebrate victory after 5-year contract fight

SAN FRANCISCO — Members of UNITE HERE Local 2 held a celebration of about 75 people here Aug. 8 to mark their victory against Centerplate, a food-catering company servicing more than 300 stadiums and other venues in the U.S., Canada and the United Kingdom. Some 800

concession workers at AT&T Park Stadium signed a contract that included hard-fought wage gains and the right to transfer to other stadiums, while maintaining medical benefits.

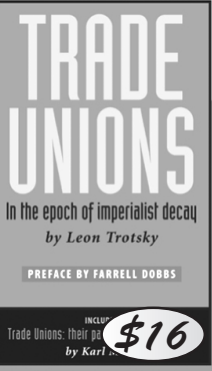
"It was a five-year struggle but as soon as we stood side by side as the union and told the community our stories we began to win," Patricia Ramirez, a culinary worker, told the *Militant*.

Workers' wages had been frozen since 2009. During their fight for a contract they picketed games and carried out strike actions.

— Carole Lesnick

TRADE UNIONS in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay

by Leon Trotsky



"More food for thought (and action) than will be found in any book on the union question."
—FARRELL DOBBS

INCLUDES: "Trade Unions: Their Past, Present and Future" by Karl Marx

PathfinderPress.com



Union members at AT&T Park in San Francisco picket at stadium during one-day strike May 25, 2013. After five-year wage freeze workers approved contract in July winning wage gains.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

August 25, 1989

NEW YORK — Thousands of striking hospital and telephone workers were joined by Eastern Airlines strikers and a group of miners on strike against Pittston coal company in a militant march that stopped business as usual in lower Manhattan August 14.

The crowd — 10,000 strong — marched from City Hall down Broadway to a labor solidarity rally in Battery Park. The event was hosted by Local 1199 Hospital and Health Care Employees Union and the Communications Workers of America. CWA members are on strike at Nynex and three other regional telephone companies.

The rally kicked off a three-day strike by 43,000 members of Local 1199 against the League of Voluntary Hospitals in New York.

CWA and Local 1199 members marched with signs that said, "Fighting back for quality health care."

THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

August 24, 1964

BOMBAY, India — A meeting was held under the auspices of Indo-Cuban Society at the hall of the Bombay Union of Journalists, on the eve of the July 26 Revolution Day in Cuba.

The following resolution [excerpt] was unanimously adopted:

"This meeting of citizens of Bombay, held under the auspices of the Indo-Cuban Society, sends its fraternal greeting to the people of Cuba on the occasion of their historic July 26 Revolution Day, and expresses its solidarity with them in their determination to defend their inherent right to shape their destiny according to their own genius and build a social order of their own choice, without any outside interference.

"This meeting appeals to the various mass organizations and political parties in India to mobilize public opinion in the country in defence of the gains of the Cuban revolution."

SOCIALIST APPEAL

Published Weekly on the Orders of the Socialist Party of New York, Left Wing Branch.

August 25, 1939

Hitler Germany's announcement Monday night that secret negotiations with Stalin were culminating in a "non-aggression" pact between Hitler and Stalin came as a thunderbolt to the European chancelleries, the "Peoples Fronters," the imperialist lackeys of the Second and Third Internationals — but it was no surprise to the Fourth International.

We predicted this publicly more than 10 months ago!

"Trotsky predicts Stalin will now seek an understanding with Hitler" was the headline in the *Socialist Appeal*, October 8, 1938. Commenting on the Munich pact, Trotsky wrote then:

"The collapse of Czechoslovakia is the collapse of Stalin's international policy of the last five years. Moscow's idea of 'an alliance of democracies' for a struggle against fascism is a lifeless fiction."

Steelworkers

Continued from front page

one union member crossed the picket line.

The one concession the union did not beat back was the company's demand to contract out certain jobs. Honeywell has since done this for about 85 jobs at the facility.

At a July 31 union meeting, the day before the lockout, members voted not to consider the company's final offer and authorized a strike. About 120 of the 135 union members at the facility were present, Local 7-669 President Stephen Lech told the *Militant*.

"The two biggest issues in these negotiations are contracting out and health care," he said. "Honeywell is demanding the right to contract out all but 40 jobs at the plant. On top of that they want union members to pay \$8,000 more than we currently do for medical care.

"Honeywell also wants a six-year contract, a ban on distribution of union literature in the plant and at the plant gate, extension to two years of the time disciplinary actions can remain in personnel files, and lengthening of the probationary period for new employees," said Lech. "Taken as a whole this is a union-busting contract proposal."

In September 2010, a hydrogen explosion rocked the plant after the company started up production with replacement workers during the lockout. A second release of hydrogen fluoride used in uranium enrichment took place on Dec. 22 that year.

The union's website prominently features a statement entitled, "We Won't Let Honeywell Put Profits Before Worker Safety," in which the last sentence reads, "We are the guardians of safety."

Negotiations are scheduled to resume Aug. 18.

Prison paintings on Cuban 5 shown at Liverpool, UK event

BY CAROLINE BELLAMY

LIVERPOOL, England — “These paintings bring to mind the prison where my daughters are,” Kevin Smith told the *Militant* at a meeting of 30 people at the CASA bar and community center here Aug. 2 that showed Antonio Guerrero’s watercolor collection titled, “I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived.” (See “Who Are the Cuban Five?” on page 7.)

Smith’s daughters Maureen and Kelly are currently serving 23 and 22 years without parole on murder-related “joint enterprise” charges. The three-century-old joint enterprise doctrine allows prosecution based on association or knowledge of a crime or someone convicted of one.

Kevin Robinson, former chair of the Hillsborough Justice Campaign, brought a message of solidarity from the group, which fights to reveal the truth about the deaths of 96 Liverpool football fans crushed to death during an incident at a 1989 game as a result of how it was handled by police.

“In all struggles you never lose your sense of humor,” Robinson, a dockworker sacked during the 1995-98 strike, told the meeting. “It frustrates them when you keep bouncing back. It is justice or the lack of justice that links Hillsborough and the Cuban Five.”

Tony Nelson, manager of the CASA bar and also a former dockworker, welcomed those who attended. The bar was established by sacked dockworkers with union backing.

“Three of the Five volunteered to fight in Angola,” pointed out Pete Clifford of the Communist League in Manchester, referring to Cuba’s internationalist volunteer combat mission that between 1975 and 1991 fought against the invading armies of white-supremacist South Africa.



Militant/Ann Fiander
Paul Windle and daughter Anna set up paintings for exhibit of Antonio Guerrero’s watercolors at CASA bar and community center in Liverpool, England, Aug. 2.

“What hundreds of thousands of Cuban volunteers did there stuck in the throat of Washington. Antonio himself studied in Kiev. People there know what Cuba has done to treat thousands affected in the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear explosion. This is what the Five are fighting to defend. Not only socialism in Cuba, but a socialism that takes working-class solidarity elsewhere.”

“None of the Five are free until they are all free,” said the main speaker, Geoff Bottoms of the National Executive Committee of the Cuba

Continued from front page

called Donetsk People’s Republic, declared a “state of siege” in Donetsk Aug. 4 and announced he was now the “military commandant.”

Alexander Borodai, another Russian with ties to military intelligence who had proclaimed himself prime minister of the Donetsk People’s Republic, announced his resignation Aug. 7.

As the separatists retreat the regime in Moscow continues to seek ways to destabilize Ukraine. On Aug. 12 a convoy of 280 trucks left a military base in Russia for Ukraine, carrying what Moscow said was 2,000 tons of “humanitarian” aid for residents in Luhansk who have been without electricity or water for more than a week as Ukrainian forces tightened their encirclement of the city.

Ukrainian government spokespeople have denounced Moscow’s move. “Russia’s cynicism knows no bounds,” Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk said Aug. 13. Moscow dispatches aid, he said, while they are responsible for people’s misery by supplying weapons and fighters to the separatists.

Ukrainian officials have said the aid could be delivered if it’s inspected by Ukrainian border agents, transferred to control of the International Red Cross for delivery, and not handed over to paramilitary forces.

“I’m happy to see them gone,” Tamara Yarontseva told the *Wall Street Journal* Aug. 12, after separatists had been driven out of Siversk, one of many eastern cities liberated in recent weeks.

Some residents there yelled at Ukrainian soldiers as they entered

‘End the deportations,’ say protesters in DC



Juntos

WASHINGTON — Some 2,000 opponents of government anti-immigrant policies from across the country marched to the White House Aug. 2 to demand an end to deportations.

Speaking is Pilar Molina from Norristown, Pennsylvania, who recounted her victory in winning the release of her husband Israel Resendiz on June 19, after nearly five months of detention. He was arrested following his return from Mexico where he attended his father’s funeral. Supporters of Resendiz organized a vigil, took part in other actions, carried out a letter-writing campaign and publicized a hunger strike by him, his brother and another inmate at the Pike County Correctional Facility.

— GEORGE CHALMERS

Solidarity Campaign, which organized the event. “They put their faith in international solidarity and they continue to fight for their revolution. They are not broken men, they see how things are interlinked in the struggle for a better world. So we all

need to get struggling, get fighting, and in the end we’ll all win.”

Participants picked up nine copies of *I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived*, which includes reproductions of Guerrero’s paintings with descriptions and related writings by him and his comrades.

Separatist forces retreat in eastern Ukraine

the town. But most welcomed them as they began restoring electricity and water supplies and removing mines left behind by fleeing paramilitaries, both soldiers and local workers told the *Journal*.

As separatist paramilitaries have been fracturing and retreating, they have blamed Moscow for not invading Ukraine to aid them. But the government of President Vladimir Putin faces opposition to invasion among both a large section of the capitalist rulers and working class.

This opposition is augmented by the country’s growing economic crisis and imperialist financial and trade sanctions. Oil and natural gas make up 68 percent of Russia’s total exports and account for more than half the government’s budget. Crude oil prices worldwide hit a nine-month low Aug. 12. Food prices are rising. Some \$75 billion in capital has fled the Russian economy in the first six months of this year, more than in all of 2013.

Moscow fears contagion

Moscow’s biggest fear is contagion at home from the mobilizations in Ukraine. Supporters of greater autonomy for Siberia called for an Aug. 17 “march for federalization of Siberia” in Novosibirsk.

BBC reported that in the face of government threats to shut down reporting about the march, online media sites were full of discussion of the protest, including people comparing it to the Maidan mobilizations in Ukraine that brought down the pro-Moscow regime.

The government has banned the march.

Opponents of Russian government

interference in Ukraine called an anti-war rally in Moscow Aug. 12. Authorities banned that action as well, but dozens showed up nonetheless. Surrounded by cops and riot police, they marched through the streets and placed flowers and candles outside the Ukrainian Embassy.

Ukraine economy weakens

Ukraine’s capitalist economy, under pressure from Moscow, has deteriorated.

Construction is down 9 percent; manufacturing, 5 percent; export, 5 percent; and imports, 18 percent. Unemployment increased to 9.3 percent in the first quarter of 2014. The International Monetary Fund and other foreign investors are demanding sharp reductions in state allocations for social services and imposition of higher taxes, especially those that fall hardest on working people, seeking to make the country more attractive for capital investment.

To maximize profits, mine bosses continue to attack safety conditions on the job. Eighteen miners were injured and two are missing after a gas explosion and fire hit the Skakhtoupravleniye Pokrovskoye coal mine in Krasnoarmeisk in eastern Ukraine Aug. 12.

Meanwhile, the Kiev government dropped a proposed law Aug. 14 that, on the pretext of “national security,” would have given the president the power to ban or restrict media coverage, including on the Internet, and limit production or circulation of printed material. The National Union of Journalists in Ukraine and others had protested the law, saying it would restrict free speech and open the door to censorship.

Exhibit of paintings by Antonio Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five *I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived*



Manchester, England
August 13-September 7

Exhibit hours: Mon.-Sat. 11AM-6.30PM. Sun. 12-5:30PM. Nexus Art Cafe, 2 Dale St., M1 1JW.

‘Need to show US, world who Cuban 5 really are’

Fellow prisoner: Ramón Labañino ‘earned respect and helped you become a better person’

“I have to thank God for the time I shared with Ramón. It was an experience that left a deep impression on me.” Those were the words of Secundino Pérez as he talked to *Militant* reporter Róger Calero about getting to know Ramón Labañino when they were imprisoned together at the Miami Federal Detention Center (FDC) in 2009-10.

Labañino is one of the five Cuban revolutionaries arrested and framed up by the U.S. government in 1998. Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, and Labañino have now been locked up for 16 years. René González and Fernando González are both back in Cuba after having completed their entire sentences. (See “Who Are the Cuban Five?” below.)

Labañino was transferred to the Miami FDC in September 2009 to await a resentencing hearing. A year earlier, an appeals court had overturned the sentences for Labañino, Antonio Guerrero and Fernando González as exceeding federal guidelines. The U.S. authorities hoped to calm what a federal prosecutor called the “contentiousness” and “noise” of the international outcry against the draconian sentences imposed on each of the Five and the broad campaign for their release. Hernández, Labañino and Guerrero had all been given life without parole. At a December 2009 hearing, Labañino’s sentence on false charges of “conspiracy to gather and transmit to a foreign government information relating to national defense” was reduced from life to 30 years.

The interview with Pérez took place in Havana in two parts. The first was March 1. At the time, Pérez, who is from western Cuba, was visiting Elizabeth Palmeiro, Labañino’s wife. She put him in contact with *Militant* reporters who were covering the annual Havana International Book Fair as well as Fernando González’s return to Cuba. One of the books presented at the fair was *Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five*, published by Pathfinder Press, which includes an interview that Pérez gave Ed-

mundo García on Miami-based Radio Progreso. The interview printed below was completed July 20.

Translation from Spanish is by the *Militant*.



RÓGER CALERO: Secundino, tell us a little about yourself.

SECUNDINO PÉREZ: I grew up in Pinar del Río and graduated from medical school there in 1992. I left for the United States in 1999. My father was living in Miami and I wanted to reunite with my family. I was 31 years old.

From the outside you get a different idea of what the United States is like. Yes, it’s a developed country. But I was jarred not to find the human solidarity that exists here in Cuba.

I lived in the United States for 13 years. During that time I got in trouble with the law. After I completed my sentence in February 2012, I went to Mexico, where I had legal resident status. I found work in Cancún and started over again. I’m working in a restaurant there.

CALERO: How did you meet Ramón?

PÉREZ: I met him when I was transferred to the FDC in Miami — “Downtown,” as they call it. That was Oct. 31, 2009. He was in Unit F East, on the 10th floor.

When I arrived, the other Cubans said, “Hey, look — it’s a Cuban!” Ramón immediately came over to greet me. He asked, “Do you need anything?”

Afterward he told me that during my first days there I looked a little anxious and depressed. He approached me and said, “Take it easy. You’ll see that you’re going to be okay here. There are Cubans here. I’m Ramón, one of the Five.” That’s how our friendship began.

CALERO: Did you already know about the Five?

PÉREZ: Yes. They’d been arrested in 1998, a year before I left Cuba for the United States. When I was in Miami, it was all over the radio and press, especially during the trial in 2000-2001.

CALERO: Did Ramón have the same



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Secundino Pérez, above, was in prison with Ramón Labañino, one of Cuban Five. “We need to continue the campaign to bring all Five home,” he said during recent interview with *Militant*.

attitude toward other prisoners that he showed toward you?

PÉREZ: He was the same with everyone. It didn’t matter if you were from Honduras or from the U.S. or anywhere else. Ramón would help you in every way he could. He would treat you with respect. And he earned the respect of others. That’s the real Ramón.

Because of the big campaign carried out against the Five in the United States, you might develop a certain image of them — that they were dangerous spies or some kind of terrorists.

When you learn the truth, you find that it’s totally different. You tell yourself, “Damn, the whole thing was a lie.”

What’s more, Ramón would show you the documents from the trial. He would say, “Look, don’t take my word for it. See for yourself. We were in the United States to defend the people of Cuba. We were trying to prevent attacks.”

Then you begin to realize who the Five really are.

CALERO: How long were you in prison with him?

PÉREZ: For about six months. Ramón was resentenced in December 2009 and he was transferred out around June 2010. Before that, they moved me to the unit across from his, and we maintained contact. Every unit had a door with a window that led to the common recreation area. So when one of us was in the gym, we could see each other through the

window and greet each other through the crack under the door.

I have to thank God for the time I shared with Ramón, because it was an experience that left a deep impression on me. He would help you with anything. He would talk about any subject — about both Cuba and the U.S. And he’d never tell you, “This is how things are.” He’d give you facts to think about. He used to get newspapers and other literature and he’d share it with all of us.

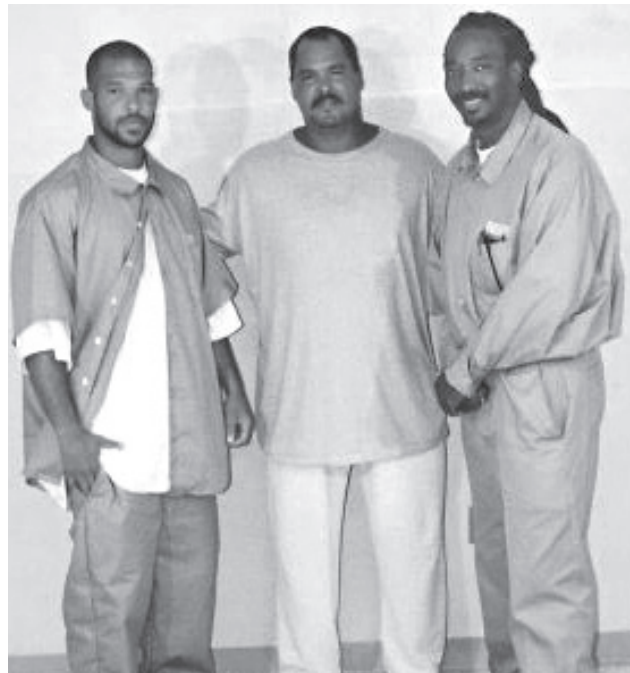
Another thing — he would never ask why you were in prison, what you had done. Instead, he would help you become a better person. All those things gave you confidence in Ramón.

He was approached by everyone. If someone was cooking a meal — we could cook meals in prison, using a microwave — they would say, “Hey, Cuba,” or “Come over here, Ramón.” They would make him feel welcome when he came to watch TV or play chess. He liked to play chess and played a lot with an African-American guy in the unit. People would invite him to play handball. They just liked to be around him.

CALERO: Fernando González finally returned to Cuba after completing his sentence of more than 15 years. During a press conference at the airport, Fernando said the U.S. immigration police who were deporting him didn’t take off his handcuffs until the plane touched down on Cuban soil. He said he didn’t feel free until that moment.

PÉREZ: It was outrageous, even cruel. They know the Five are not dangerous men. In my opinion, the U.S. authorities did that to punish him right up to the very last moment.

The Cuban people are delighted about Fernando’s return. But we need to continue the campaign that will eventually bring all of them home. We need to show the people of the United States and the world who the Cuban Five really are.



Ramón Labañino, center, in McCreary, Ky., federal prison, 2009.

Who are the Cuban Five?



Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González are Cuban revolutionaries who during the 1990s accepted assignments from the Cuban government to gather information on the operations and plans of Cuban-American paramilitary groups based in southern Florida. These rightist outfits, organizing on U.S. soil with virtual impunity, have a long record of carrying out bombings, assassinations and other attacks, both against targets in Cuba and supporters of the Cuban Revolution in the United States, Puerto Rico and elsewhere.

On Sept. 12, 1998, the Five were arrested by the FBI. They were framed up and convicted on a variety of charges, which included acting as unregistered agents of the Cuban government and possession of false identity documents. Without a shred of evidence, three were charged with “conspiracy to gather and transmit national defense information.”

Hernández was also convicted of conspiracy to commit murder, on the pretext that he bore responsibility for the Cuban government’s 1996 shootdown of two Brothers to the Rescue planes that had invaded Cuban airspace in disregard of Havana’s repeated warnings. He is serving two life terms plus 15 years. His wife Adriana Pérez is barred from entering the United States.

René González returned to Cuba in May 2013 and Fernando González on Feb. 28 this year.

To toilers of East: Ally with workers of world, not Uncle Sam

To See the Dawn, *one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month*, contains the proceedings of the First Congress of the Peoples of the East convened by the Communist International Sept. 1-7, 1920, in Baku, Azerbaijan. Inspired by the October 1917 revolution in Russia, which opened a new stage in the emancipation struggle of colonial peoples, 2,000 delegates, representing toilers of Asia, participated in the congress. The excerpt is from a speech by U.S. delegate John Reed. The speech, not delivered due to a shortage of time, was appended to the proceedings. Reed — best known for his book *Ten Days That Shook the World*, a firsthand account of the Russian Revolution — was won to the genuinely Marxist course of the Bolshevik Party under the leadership of V.I. Lenin and became a founding leader of the communist movement in the U.S. Copyright © 1993 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JOHN REED

I represent here the revolutionary workers of one of the great imperialist powers, the United States of America, which exploits and oppresses the peoples of the colonies.

You, the peoples of the East, the peoples of Asia, have not yet experienced



“We appreciate the need for solidarity among all oppressed and toiling peoples, for unity of the revolutionary workers of all the countries of Europe and America under the leadership of the Russian Bolsheviks,” wrote John Reed, U.S. delegate to First Congress of the Peoples of the East held in Baku, seated third from bottom right, holding outstretched hand of another participant.

for yourselves the rule of America. You know and hate the British, French, and Italian imperialists, and probably you think that “free America” will govern better, will liberate the peoples of the colonies, will feed and defend them.

No. The workers and peasants of the Philippines, the peoples of Central America and the islands of the Caribbean — they know what it means to live under the rule of “free America.” ...

Today the American capitalists are addressing friendly words to the peoples of the East, with a promise of aid and food. This applies especially to Armenia. Millions of dollars have been collected by the American millionaires in order to send bread to the starving Armenians. And many Armenians are now looking for help to Uncle Sam.

These same American capitalists incite the American workers and farmers against each other. They starve and exploit the peoples of Cuba and the Philippines. Savagely they kill American Negroes and burn them alive. And in America itself, American workers are obliged to work under frightful conditions, receiving low wages for a long workday. When they are exhausted and used up they are thrown out onto the street, where they die of hunger.

The very gentleman now in charge

of bringing aid to the starving Armenians, Mr. Cleveland Dodge, who writes emotional articles about how the Turks have driven the Armenians into the desert, is the owner of big copper mines where thousands of American workers are exploited. When these workers dared to go on strike, the guards protecting Mr. Dodge's mines drove them at bayonet point out into the desert — just as was done to the Armenians.

Many Armenians are grateful to America for its attitude to the Armenians who suffered from the brutality of the Turks during the war. But what has America done for the Armenians apart from issuing hollow declarations? Nothing. I was in Constantinople at that time, in 1915, and I know that the missionaries refused to make any serious protest against the atrocities, saying they had a lot of property in Turkey and so did not want to put pressure on the Turks. ...

Together with the other capitalist nations, united in the League of Nations, the American capitalists are afraid that the workers and peasants of Armenia will follow the example of Soviet Russia and Soviet Azerbaijan — take power, take their country's resources into their own hands, and work for themselves, making a united front with

workers and peasants around the world against world imperialism. The American capitalists are afraid of a revolution in the East. ...

The American capitalists promise bread to Armenia. This is an old trick. They promise bread but never give it. Did Hungary get bread after the fall of the Soviet government? No. The Hungarian people are still starving today. Did the Baltic countries get bread? No. When the starving Estonians had nothing but potatoes, the American capitalists sent them ships laden with rotten potatoes that could not be sold at a profit in America. No, comrades, Uncle Sam never gives anybody something for nothing. He comes along with a sack stuffed with hay in one hand and a whip in the other. Anyone who accepts Uncle Sam's promises at their face value will find that they must be paid for in sweat and blood.

American workers are demanding an ever larger share of the product of their labor. With a view to preventing revolution at home, the American capitalists are forced to seek out colonial peoples to exploit, peoples who will furnish sufficient profits to keep the American workers in obedience and so make them participants in the exploitation of the Armenians. I represent thousands of revolutionary American workers who know this. They understand that, acting together with the Armenian workers and peasants, with the toiling masses around the world, they will overthrow capitalism. World capitalism will be destroyed, and all the peoples will be free.

We appreciate the need for solidarity among all oppressed and toiling peoples, for unity of the revolutionary workers of all the countries of Europe and America under the leadership of the Russian Bolsheviks, in the Communist International. And we say to you, peoples of the East: Do not believe the promises of the American capitalists!

There is only one road to freedom. Unite with the Russian workers and peasants who have overthrown their capitalists and whose Red Army has beaten the foreign imperialists! Follow the red star of the Communist International!

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Chart road foward for toilers of Palestine and Israel

Working people worldwide should join actions condemning Washington-backed Israeli assaults on Gaza and support the decades-long struggle of the Palestinian people, whose fight against national oppression has been shackled by the senseless cycle of Hamas terrorism and murderous retaliation of Tel Aviv’s armed forces.

A new round of negotiations between the Israeli regime and representatives of the Palestinian Authority and Hamas has begun. Under current conditions, a foundation for a way forward can only be built on an agreement that includes:

□ Recognition of a Palestinian state, as it is today, as a stepping stone to fight for a single, viable geographical homeland for the Palestinian people.

□ Recognition of Israel, as it is today, both a Jewish and increasingly multinational secular state. This includes the right of return for the Jews, which will become increasingly relevant as the world crisis of capitalism kindles Jew hatred as a reactionary bludgeon against fighting labor.

These are essential immediate demands working people should back today to break the cycle of wars and bloodshed. A course of struggle on this basis would boost the self-confidence of the Palestinian masses and open the door to a renewal of their involvement as the motor force of the Palestinian struggle. It would open space to fight the balkanization of Palestine, for jobs for the unemployed, for land and water rights and for Palestinians’ freedom to travel, including the right to cross the border into

Israel to work. It would provide stronger footing for economic and social development in Gaza and the West Bank. And it would create political space for the class struggle and the advancement of working-class solidarity in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, as well as in Lebanon, Jordan and elsewhere across the Middle East.

Any course that does not bring an end to the recurring retaliatory conflicts will only perpetuate the useless sacrifice of Palestinian lives. It will only continue to drive Jewish working people in Israel to support Tel Aviv’s wars, suppressing class consciousness and class-struggle activity in Israel. And it will maximize pressure on Palestinian toilers and their backers to remain silent about, or seek to rationalize, the deadly anti-working-class strategy of Hamas.

Hamas’ course has increased not only its own unpopularity, but the isolation of the Palestinian national struggle. For the first time, virtually no Arab government has felt enough pressure even to feign support for the Palestinian cause. And Hamas is becoming increasingly unpopular in Gaza, the West Bank and throughout the Middle East, as it violently suppresses political opposition to its rule and time and again hurls missiles and builds tunnels into Israel with full expectation that its actions will precipitate an Israeli military response whose only result will be death and destruction in Gaza. Its only “strategy” is to appeal to bourgeois public opinion at the cost of Palestinian lives and limbs taken by Israeli attacks, hoping to push Washington and other imperialist

powers to withhold military aid from Tel Aviv and exert diplomatic pressure on it.

Israel has existed for 66 years. Revolutionary-minded working people have ceased some time ago being able to effectively set Israel apart from every other country on earth. The Palestinian and other Arab masses, too, will pay a big price for continuing to do so — and they recognize this fact more than ever before and are willing to act on it, if a leadership steps forth to lead the political fight.

A strategy that can advance the Palestinian cause and the interests of working people must also start with the class struggle and growing social contradictions in Israel itself. It must reach out to and seek sympathy and support among workers and their allies of Jewish, Arab, and other backgrounds in Israel and relate to new stirrings of working-class resistance — from union battles and street mobilizations against government policies, to struggles of immigrant workers, fights against police brutality and other social protests.

A Palestinian leadership championing and fighting for this overall course would attract the attention of working people across the Arab and Muslim world, have a powerful impact on workers in Israel, and win support among workers and farmers in the U.S. and other imperialist countries. It would inspire workers in struggle, from port truck drivers fighting to organize a union, to protesters against the cop killings of Eric Garner and Michael Brown and fast-food workers fighting for a \$15-an-hour minimum wage.

Kurdish fighters hold off advance of al-Qaeda group in Iraq

Continued from front page

Iraq’s second largest city, as the Iraqi army disintegrated.

The Peshmerga, the army of the Kurdish Regional Government in northern Iraq, responded by expanding Kurdish-controlled territory by 30 percent, including taking control of the oil-rich city of Kirkuk. Peshmerga, with some 200,000 men and women under arms, is the most experienced and best organized military force in the country.

Following the April 2003 overthrow of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, the Kurds, an oppressed nationality of some 30 million people, carved out an autonomous region in the northeast and have been advancing their fight for national rights in Turkey, Syria and Iran.

The Kurds were denied a homeland by the post-World War II carving up of the Middle East by the imperialist powers of Britain and France.

Kurdish officials in July requested that the Barack Obama administration provide ammunition, machine guns and other equipment, but for weeks U.S. officials have said they are “assessing” the request.

On Aug. 3, ISIS forces seized control of several towns in Kurdistan, including Sinjar. Tens of thousands of members of the Kurdish-speaking Yazidi religious group who live there sought refuge on Mount Sinjar, as ISIS threatened to kill those who did not convert to Sunni Islam.

Peshmerga units were forced to retreat from battling ISIS in Sinjar after running out of ammunition.

Four days later Obama announced airstrikes to “protect our American personnel” stationed at a consulate and joint military center operated with the Kurds in Erbil, the province’s capital city, along with airdrops of food and water to Yazidis stranded on the mountain.

Kurdish fighters from Iraq, Syria and Turkey mobilized to lead thousands of Yazidis into Syria and then to refugee camps in Iraq or Syria.

The Peshmerga retook the towns of Mahmour and Gwer from ISIS Aug. 10. Among those joining the effort are civilian volunteers from throughout Iraqi Kurdistan. “We have guns, but we need heavy weapons,” Abdul Aziz Ibrahim, 52, told the *Washington Post* as he joined the fight with an aged AK-47 borrowed from a relative.

Military dictatorships led by Saddam Hussein in Iraq and Hafez and Bashar al-Assad in Syria took power after a series of struggles overthrew colonial rule following World War II.

Hussein’s power rested on a Sunni Arab ruling class and oppression of the Kurds and Shia Arab majority.

The rise of both Assad and Hussein and their rival Baathist parties was facilitated by the Stalinist movement, which betrayed struggles of toilers to suit Moscow’s diplomatic needs.

Unintended consequences for U.S. rulers

The U.S. war in Iraq that brought down the Hussein regime in 2003 led to a series of unintended consequences for U.S. imperialism.

It opened space for the Kurds to advance their fight for an independent homeland.

At the same time Sunnis in Iraq were marginalized for the first time since the overthrow of colonial rule, as sectarian conflicts intensified under a government dominated by Shiite capitalist rulers, led since 2006 by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.

The fall of Hussein helped inspire the mass uprisings that overthrew U.S.-backed dictatorships in Tunisia and Egypt in 2011, as well as in Libya.

In March 2011, mass protests erupted across Syria for political rights and an end to Assad’s rule. Facing brutal repression, opposition forces took control of Aleppo, Syria’s largest city, and growing parts of the country. But Assad’s relentless war, based on air power and artillery the opposition has no means to counter, and carried out with backing from Moscow and Tehran, has taken a massive toll on rebel fighters and quelled popular rebellion.

These developments created openings for anti-working-class Islamist groups. ISIS — born out of factional divisions within al-Qaeda — has established

control over most of Raqqa province in Syria, where about 1 million people live. This was accomplished by ISIS directing its fire not at Assad, but against anti-Assad forces fighting the regime and at the Kurds.

Assad’s troops are now preparing to lay siege to Aleppo. While the al-Qaeda forces and the Assad regime remain bitter rivals, ISIS units in the area have consciously aided the regime’s offensive.

The Obama administration’s approach to the Assad regime’s targeting of civilians — 180,000 Syrians have been killed over the past two years and millions have been driven from their homes — has been to let it bleed. “The idea that we could provide some light arms or even more sophisticated arms to what was essentially an opposition made up of former doctors, farmers, pharmacists and so forth, and that they were going to be able to battle not only a well-armed state but also a well-armed state backed by Russia, backed by Iran, a battle-hardened Hezbollah, that was never in the cards,” Obama told the *New York Times* Aug. 8.

The administration’s foreign policy has met increasing criticism from figures in the U.S. ruling class, who are concerned that U.S. imperialist interests around the world require greater use of military intervention.

In Syria, “the failure to help build up a credible fighting force of the people who were the originators of the protests against Assad — there were Islamists, there were secularists, there was everything in the middle — the failure to do that left a big vacuum, which the jihadists have now filled,” Hillary Clinton, Obama’s former secretary of state, told the *Atlantic* Aug. 10, in her first public break with administration foreign policy.



Reuters/Azad Lashkari

Kurdish Peshmerga fighters deploy to confront ISIS Aug. 8 in Khazer, 25 miles west of Erbil, capital of Iraqi Kurdistan.